

# GLOSSARY OF TERMS COMMONLY USED IN VIRGINIA'S JUVENILE JUSTICE SYSTEM

Like all fields of professional practice, Virginia's juvenile justice system has its own language. Specialized terms are necessary for accurate communication among practitioners in the field, but may hinder communication with those who are not familiar with the terms and references. The lists below are intended as a layperson's guide to the definitions and abbreviations most commonly used in Virginia's juvenile justice system. The lists are not all-inclusive: many areas of the agency have their own specialized terminology and terms and abbreviations that are not generally applicable across a wide spectrum are not included here.

The definitions are written in plain English, offering the ordinary meaning of the terms, and not necessarily the technical definition. Also, the terms may have broader or additional specific meanings when used in other contexts. Persons who apply and interpret policies, procedures and regulations are responsible for knowing the legal or technical definition of all terms used in their work. (In the list below, a notation following the definition refers to a fuller or more technically complete definition appearing in statute or regulation.)

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"Absconder" means an offender on probation or parole supervision who fails to report to his probation or parole officer and cannot be located for the purpose of establishing or continuing supervision. A warrant can be issued for the apprehension and detention of an absconder.

"Adjudication" means the finding by the court that the accused is guilty or not guilty of the offense charged, based on testimony and evidence presented.

"Adjudicatory Hearing" means the court hearing where innocence or guilt is determined. Witnesses and testimony are presented, similar to a trial.

"Agency" or "Department" means the Department of Juvenile Justice.

"Alternative placement" means assignment of a ward to a residential facility other than a juvenile correctional center while in direct care.

"Background investigation" means a review of an individual's records and interviews with sources of information to determine suitability for service as an employee or volunteer in Virginia's juvenile justice system. The background investigation may, depending on its scope, include fingerprint checks from the State Police and the FBI; local agency checks; employment verification and check of references; verification of

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education; verification of licensure where relevant to employment; computer checks with the VCIN; NCIC, and DMV; CPS check (required for those positions which involve regular or routine contact with the juveniles served by the Department). (See Procedure # 05-002.)

“Behavior management” means those principles and methods used to help a child achieve positive behavior and to address and correct inappropriate behavior in a constructive and safe manner. (See 22 VAC 42-10-10.)

“Behavioral Services Unit (BSU)” means the professional staff of psychologists and clinical social workers and their clerical support who provide psychological evaluations and individual and group therapy in juvenile correctional centers and at RDC. The unit also operates Sex Offender Treatment programs in several juvenile correctional centers and oversees substance abuse treatment services.

"Board" means the State Board of Juvenile Justice, the Board that governs the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice. Its seven non-salaried members serve staggered four-year terms and are appointed by the Governor. The Board is required by statute to meet once per calendar quarter.

"Boot camp" means a short-term secure or nonsecure juvenile residential program that includes aspects of basic military training, such as drill and ceremony. (See 6 VAC 35-140-10; COV § 16.1-228.)

“Certification” means the process by which the Board exercises its regulatory oversight over programs and facilities in Virginia’s juvenile justice system. The term is broadly used to refer to the entire process including on-site audits by certification teams, the reporting of the audit findings to the Board, and the Board’s final authorization for the program or facility to operate. The term is narrowly used to refer to the specific authorization or approval to operate. (See 6 VAC 35-20)

“Child in Need of Services” means a child whose behavior, conduct or condition presents or results in a serious threat to the well-being and physical safety of the child. (See COV § 16.1-228).

“Child in Need of Supervision” means a child who habitually and without justification is absent from school despite opportunity and reasonable efforts to keep him in school or who habitually runs away from home or a residential care court placement. (See COV § 16.1-288).

“Classification of wards” means a system to determine the treatment and security needs of committed juveniles and to assign them to an appropriate program and custody level. (See PROCEDURE #20-201.)

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“Commitment” means an order by a judge at the dispositional hearing which transfers a delinquent juvenile’s legal custody to the State Department of Juvenile Justice. Depending on the circumstances, the commitment may be for a determinate or an indeterminate period of time. (See Virginia Code § 16.1-278.8.)

“Complaint” means an allegation brought to an intake officer that a juvenile is a child in need of services, a child is in need of supervision or is alleged to have committed a delinquent act.

"Contraband" means items that wards, probationers or parolees are prohibited from possessing.

"Corporal punishment" means punishment administered by intentionally inflicting pain or discomfort to the body. (See 22 VAC 42-10-10.)

"Court order" means an order issued by a state or federal court and signed by a judge.

“Court service unit” means a local or state agency that provides important services on behalf of the juvenile and domestic relations district court, including intake, investigations and reports, probation, parole, counseling, and other related services in the community.

"Delinquent child" means a child who has committed a delinquent act or an adult who has committed a delinquent act prior to his eighteenth birthday, except where the jurisdiction of the juvenile court has been terminated under the provisions of § [16.1-269.6](#).

“Delinquent offense” means an act committed by a juvenile that would be a felony or misdemeanor if committed by an adult. A delinquent offense does not include an act that is otherwise lawful but prohibited to juveniles.

“Department” means the Department of Juvenile Justice.

“Detention,” in its broadest sense, means temporarily placing an individual in a secure setting resulting in the individual’s loss of freedom.

“Secure detention” means temporary care of a child alleged to be delinquent in physically restricting facilities and providing intensive supervision pending court disposition or execution of a court order.

“Detention hearing” means a hearing before a judge to determine whether a juvenile should be placed in detention, continue to be held in detention, or be released until the adjudicatory hearing

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“Detention home” means a short-term secure facility for confining juvenile offenders who are awaiting an adjudicatory hearing or a dispositional hearing, or who have been ordered detained for up to six months following their dispositional hearing.

“Detention order” means the official legal paper signed by a person authorized to detain youth which contains such information as the youth’s name and address, birth date, offense, and the detaining jurisdiction; sometimes referred to as an attachment.

"Determinate commitment" means that the court has specified how long the juvenile who has been found to be a “serious offender” must remain in direct care. (See Virginia Code § 16.1-285.1) The law provides for periodic reviews of such cases after two years have elapsed.

"Direct care" means the status of a juvenile who has been committed to the Department and received into the Department’s custody, usually through placement in a juvenile correctional center or an alternative placement with a private provider. (See SOP-216)

“Direct discharge” means release from a juvenile correctional center with no continuing supervision or treatment. (See SOP-208)

"Director" means the Director of the Department of Juvenile Justice.

“Discharge date” means the date an offender is released from incarceration, parole supervision, or probation supervision, as the case may be.

"Disposition" means the court's decision on what will happen to a youth who has been found not innocent. It is analogous to the sentence imposed on an adult who has been found guilty.

“Dispositional Hearing:” means a hearing in a juvenile case (similar to a sentencing hearing in a criminal court) at which the court imposes treatment services and sanctions on a juvenile who has been found not innocent.

"Diversion" means removing a youth from the juvenile justice system as a result of an intake officer’s decision to proceed informally on a complaint rather than to initiate court action.. Diversion may include the provision of programs and services to youth through alternatives to the juvenile justice system or simply discontinuing the case. (See § 16.1-227 of the Code of Virginia and 6 VAC 35-150-10.)

“Domestic Relations” means all those matters coming before the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court having to do with family matters and child welfare.

“Due process” means those procedures and safeguards that protect the rights of persons facing criminal or disciplinary charges. (See SOP-108)

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"Early release date" means the projected date at which an indeterminately committed ward will first be eligible for release consideration as calculated by length of stay guidelines.

"Electronic Monitoring (EM)" means the use of an electronic device placed on a probationer or parolee to monitor his or her location and activities.

"Family oriented group home (FOG or FOGH)" means a combination of foster care and a group home where a juvenile is placed in a private group home.

"Furlough" means temporary release of a ward from a juvenile correctional center, under escort, for serious reasons such as to attend the funeral of an immediate family member or to visit a critically ill immediate family member.

"Grievance" means a formal written complaint from an offender.

"Group home" means a non-secure structured residential program that provides services such as counseling, job training and life skills. Placements may be pre- or post-dispositional.

"Halfway house" means a transitional residential program designed to help committed juveniles prepare to return to the community by providing such services as independent living skills, employment skills, and work experience.

"Hearing officer," in a juvenile correctional center, means the person designated to conduct hearings to resolve ward grievances or disciplinary hearings to resolve rule violations by wards. (See SOP-108).

"Indeterminate commitment" means that the committing court has not set a time limit for how long the juvenile will remain in the custody of the Department. Instead, the Department will determine the juvenile's length of stay based on statutory parameters and guidelines issued by the Board of Juvenile Justice. (See Virginia Code § 16.1-285.)

"Individualized service plan" or "individual service plan" means a written plan of action to meet the needs of a specific juvenile while in direct care (See 22 VAC 42-10-10) or under probation or parole supervision (see 6VAC35-150-10.)

"Institutional operating procedures" means written instructions that apply standard operating procedures to the specific circumstances of a given facility.

"Institutional operating procedures" means written instructions that provide guidance on the day to day operation of a juvenile residential facility.

"Intake" means the point at which a youth first makes contact with the juvenile court. An intake officer decides whether to initiate court action should or whether to refer the juvenile elsewhere.

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“Intake case” means an occurrence of a juvenile being brought before an intake officer for one or more alleged violations of law. One case can involve multiple intake complaints.

“Intake Officer” means a probation officer specifically authorized to act on a complaint and to decide whether to initiate court action or take informal action prescribed by law. See Virginia Code § 16.1-260.

“Intensive supervision” means a highly structured, comprehensive continuum of monitoring and intervention for juvenile offenders who are at higher risk of reoffending or otherwise violating the conditions of their probation or parole.

“Interstate Compact” means the agreement between all 50 states to provide for the return of runaways to their home states or to provide for the transfer of probation or aftercare supervision when a youth moves from one state to another.

"Isolation" means confinement of a ward in a juvenile correctional center to a single occupancy room, along with restriction from the general population and program activities, as a disciplinary sanction for rule infractions.

“Judicial Liaison Committee” means a group of # judges appointed by the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Virginia to meet with Department administrators and facilitate communication between the department and the judiciary.

"Juvenile" means a person under the age of 18. The Code of Virginia and some regulations also use the term "child" or “youth.”

“Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court (J&DR)” means, in the Commonwealth of Virginia, the court that usually has jurisdiction over juvenile and family-related matters.

“Juvenile correctional center” means a secure custody facility housing persons who are committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice and providing 24-hour supervision, education, treatment services, recreational services and a variety of special programs. (See 22 VAC 42-10-10.)

“Juvenile industries” means work programs operated for juveniles committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice, the primary purpose of which is the training of such juveniles. (See Virginia Code § 66-25.1)

"Late release date" means the projected last day of an indeterminately committed ward's commitment as calculated per length of stay guidelines.

“Legal custody” means the legal status assigned by the court giving a person or agency the legal right to determine where and with whom a youth shall reside as well as the legal

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responsibility to provide adequate shelter, protection, medical care, food, and education for the youth.

“Length of Stay (LOS)” means the length of time a juvenile remains in a facility or in direct care.

“Length of Stay Guidelines” means a framework established by the Board of Juvenile Justice, as mandated by law, to determine how long indeterminately committed juveniles will remain in the custody of the Department. Factors that affect a ward’s length of stay include the seriousness of the offense, the juvenile’s history of offense behavior, the juvenile’s behavior while in direct care, and the juvenile’s progress toward completing treatment goals.

“Living unit” or “housing unit” means the space in a juvenile residential facility consisting of sleeping areas, bath and toilet facilities and a living room or its equivalent for use by the residents. (See 22 VAC 42-10-10.)

“Lockdown” means a temporary suspension of ordinary and routine activities in a juvenile correctional center, during which wards are confined to their cell or dormitory.

“Major offender” means a ward who is indeterminately committed to the Department for an act of murder, rape, forcible sodomy, aggravated sexual battery, arson of an occupied dwelling, armed robbery, voluntary or involuntary manslaughter, or car jacking and who was not committed as a Serious Offender pursuant to Code of Virginia § 16.1-285.1.

"Major rules" means rules that are established to protect the health and safety of residents, staff and others at a juvenile correctional facility.

"Major rule violation" means any action that is illegal or that is prohibited by the major rules of the institution and which must be resolved by a hearing officer using due process. (See 6 VAC 35-140-10.)

“Master file” means the complete record of a committed ward that is kept at the Reception and Diagnostic Center. (See 6 VAC 35-140-10.)

“Master file” means the complete record of a committed ward that is kept at the Reception and Diagnostic Center. It contains all records pertaining to the ward’s care and treatment including social, medical, psychiatric and psychological reports and records, clinical reports, predisposition study and other information relating to the commitment and the ward’s progress during commitment. (See 6 VAC 35-140-10.)

“Mechanical restraint” means a device that restricts a person's bodily movement and is used as a means to control the person's behavior when the person is a danger to himself, to others or to the security of a secure facility. (See 22 VAC 42-10.10.)

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"Minor rules" means those rules governing ward behavior in a juvenile residential facility that provide the foundation for orderly, peaceful living circumstances in the facility.

"Minor infraction" means a violation of a minor rule by a ward in a juvenile residential facility. (See 6 VAC 35-140-10.)

"Nolle Prosequi" means a decision of prosecutors to dismiss charges against defendants - Latin for "unwilling to prosecute."

"Nonresidential programs" means any variety of counseling, education, employment, diagnostic or casework services that juveniles receive in the community while continuing to reside in their own homes.

"Offender" means, generically, a person under the supervision of the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice.

"Organizational unit" means an operating unit of the Department of Juvenile Justice as defined by Administrative Directive. Organizational units include juvenile correctional centers, court service units, halfway houses, and administrative units of the agency.

"Organizational unit head" means the administrator in charge of an organizational unit.

"Parole" means a period of supervision and monitoring by a parole officer in the community following a ward's release from commitment.

"Parole Officer (PO)" means an employee of a state or local court service unit who is responsible for supervising persons released from confinement under parole supervision.

"Parolee" means a committed juvenile who has been released from incarceration and is currently under a period of supervision in the community, who must report on a regular schedule to a Parole Officer, and must obey specific conditions of release until the period of parole is completed.

"Petition" means a document filed with the court alleging that a juvenile is delinquent, a child in need of services, or an abused or neglected child, and asking that the court assume jurisdiction over the juvenile. A petition initiates formal court action.

"Physical restraint" means the use of physical contact to limit a person's ability to move. (See 22 VAC 42-10-10.)

"Predispositional" means the period of time from when charges are filed until the court makes a decision in the case.

"Pre-dispositional Detention" means confinement in a secure residential placement while a juvenile is awaiting a court disposition.

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“Pre-disposition Report” – see Social History.

"Pre-hearing detention" in a juvenile correctional center means restricting a ward to a specific location, which may or may not be locked, before a due process hearing.

“Protective Custody” means a maximum custody assignment for offenders who require protection at all times due to threat of harm by others.

“Postdispositional” means the time between disposition and final release from supervision.

“Post-dispositional Detention” means placement of an adjudicated juvenile in a secure local detention facility while the juvenile is awaiting transfer to a juvenile correctional facility or as a short-term court sanction. Generally, post-dispositional detention as a sanction falls into two categories: (1) confinement for up to 30 days and, (2) confinement for longer than 30 days but less than six months. (See Virginia Code § 16.1-284.1)

“Private Provider” means a company or non-state entity that is under contract with DJJ to provide direct-care residential beds and treatment services for committed youth.

“Probation” means court-ordered supervision of an offender in the community for a specified length of time and requiring compliance with specified rules and conditions.

“Reception and Diagnostic Center (RDC)” means the facility to which all committed juveniles are sent for educational, medical and psychiatric evaluation before being assigned to a juvenile correctional center or alternative placement.

“Recidivism” means a return to criminal behavior after conviction and treatment. DJJ defines a recidivist as a person who is found by a court to have committed a delinquent or criminal act after being placed on probation or released from confinement. (See also reoffending)

“Region” means one of three geographically-based administrative subdivisions of the Department of Juvenile Justice established to better manage the use of community resources statewide.

"Resident" means a person, regardless of age, who is assigned to live in a juvenile residential facility. Other terms with the same meaning include "ward" (a person committed to the Department), "cadet" (an individual participating in LEADER), and "inmate."

“Restitution” means repayment for having committed a crime. Restitution can be made to a specific victim in a dollar amount to repay for damages or can be made to society by working without pay for a non profit or governmental agency.

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“Restorative justice” means nonpunitive strategies for dealing with juvenile offenders that make the justice system a healing process rather than a punishment process.

“Revocation” means the act of removing an offender from probation or parole supervision due to the offender’s violating the conditions of his or her supervision or committing a new crime.

“Risk assessment” means a scored instrument that provides an objective estimate of an individual’s risk for reoffending.

“Risk based supervision” means a scientifically proven method used by probation and parole officers to classify an offender’s needs and risk to the community. The method is used to ensure that offenders are supervised effectively and efficiently.

"Sanction" means a prescribed consequence for an offense or a rule violation.

"Secure perimeter" means the boundaries of the facility through which all entries and exits are controlled by security staff.

"Security keys" means keys that open security locks and that are issued only to authorized persons.

"Security lock" means any lock used on gates, doors or access panels to restrict access to authorized persons.

“Serious Incident” means any occurrence outside the ordinary routine of a program that disrupts operations or that results in harm or the threat of harm to persons. (See Procedure # 02-004 and SOP-100.)

"Serious juvenile offender" means a ward who was committed to the Department and given a determinate commitment as a serious offender under Virginia Code § 16.1-285.1.

“Shelter Care” means a group home or foster care arrangement that provides temporary care of children in a physically unrestricting setting.

“Social history” means a comprehensive investigation and report concerning an individual before the court, including current offense and prior record, psychological and educational information, physical description, employment history, driving record, health history, behavior patterns and peer and family relationships, and risk assessment results.

"Standard operating procedures (SOPs)" means written instructions that apply uniformly to all juvenile correctional centers.

Standard means a requirement or performance level established by regulation. The terms “standards” and “regulations” are often used interchangeably.

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“Status offense” means an act that is an offense only when committed by a juvenile, e.g., truancy or running away.

"Status offender" means a child who commits an act prohibited by law which would not be criminal if committed by an adult.

“Supervision Plan” means a probation or parole plan for supervising offenders on community supervision based on an assessment of the offender’s needs and his or her level of risk to society.

“Suspended Commitment” means a disposition by a court whereby a juvenile offender is committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice but not sent immediately into state care. Whether the court will eventually send the juvenile to state care will depend on the juvenile’s compliance with other terms and conditions of the disposition.

“Technical violation” means a violation of one or more of the rules of probation or parole supervision that does not include the commission of a new offense.

“Therapeutic Community” means a substance abuse treatment program involving non-punitive treatment modes that result in overcoming addictive behavioral patterns leading to substance abuse.

“Transfer to circuit court” means that jurisdiction over a juvenile who is 14 years of age or older and who is charged with certain offenses is transferred from the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court to the Circuit Court, where the juvenile will be tried as an adult. (See Article 7 of Title 16.1 of the Code of Virginia. The law provides for different circumstances under which transfer may be initiated, including by the court, by the Commonwealth’s Attorney, or by the juvenile’s “waiving” the jurisdiction of the J&DR district court pursuant to Virginia Code § 16.1-270.)

“Transfer file” means the complete commitment record that accompanies the ward wherever the ward resides while in direct state care. (See 6 VAC 35-140-10.)

“Victim” means a person harmed by another in the commission of a crime.

“Violation” of the terms of supervision means failure by an offender to abide by a rule or condition of their supervision. A violation may be either technical or criminal in nature.

“Violent juvenile felony” means any of the delinquent acts enumerated in subsection B or C of § 16.1-269.1 when committed by a juvenile fourteen years of age or older. The offenses generally fall into the categories of murder, aggravated malicious wounding, felonious injury by mob, abduction, malicious wounding and malicious wounding of a law enforcement officer, felonious poisoning, adulteration of products, robbery, carjacking, rape, forcible sodomy or sexual object penetration. (See Virginia Code § 16.1-228)

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“Volunteer” means a person who provides goods or services to a program freely and without compensation. (See 6 VAC 35-140-10 and Policy 15-001.)

“Ward” means a juvenile who has received a determinate or an indeterminate commitment and has been received into direct care by the Department of Juvenile Justice.

“Weekender” means a juvenile who has been ordered by a judge to serve a certain number of days in post-dispositional detention, typically on weekends. The juvenile remains in school during the week and typically remains in detention from Friday afternoon until Sunday evening.

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## ABBREVIATIONS COMMONLY USED IN THE DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

The following abbreviations are commonly seen in various documents used by staff of the Department of Juvenile Justice, but may not be familiar to other staff or to persons outside the agency.

ACA	American Correctional Association
APA	Auditor of Public Accounts
BSU	Behavioral Services Unit
CCRC	Central Classification and Review Committee
CHINS	Child in Need of Services
COV	Code of Virginia; the legal code of the Commonwealth of Virginia, also abbreviated as “Virginia Code”
CORE	Not an acronym, the word stands for the “core” standards contained in the Standards for the Interdepartmental Regulation of Residential Facilities for Children, which are common to four state agencies and which must be met by a children’s residential facility in order to qualify for a license or certificate. (See 22 VAC 42-10.)

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CPMT	Community Policy and Management Team (under the CSA)
CPS	Child Protective Services
CSA	Comprehensive Services Act
CSU	Court Service Unit
DCE	Department of Correctional Education
DCJS	Department of Criminal Justice Services
DJJ	Department of Juvenile Justice
DOC	Department of Corrections
DPB	Department of Planning and Budget
DSS	Department of Social Services
ERI	Early Release Incentive
FAPT	Family Assessment and Planning Team (under the CSA)
IAT	Interagency Transfer (of funds)
ICJ	Interstate Compact on Juveniles
ICRC	Institutional Classification and Review Committee
IFB	Invitation for Bids (as part of the procurement process)
IG	Inspector General for the Department of Juvenile Justice
IOP	Institutional Operating Procedure of a juvenile correctional center
IS	Information services, the unit that maintains the Department's computer and information systems
JCC	Juvenile Correctional Center
JCO	Juvenile Correctional Officer, staff of a juvenile correctional center
JTS	Juvenile Tracking System – data and information systems that permit case management of a juvenile throughout his encounter with the juvenile justice system.

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LOS	Length of Stay (amount of time a ward is in the direct care of the Department)
MIS	(See “IS”)
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement (usually between two state agencies)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding (usually between two state agencies)
OOY	Office on Youth
PO	Probation officer or parole officer
RDC	Reception and Diagnostic Center
ROM	Regional Operations Manager
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure (applying to all juvenile correctional centers)
VAC	Virginia Administrative Code, the repository of state regulations
VCC Code	Virginia Crime Commission Code (identifying specific criminal offenses)
VJCCCA	Virginia Juvenile Community Crime Control Act
VJJIS	Virginia Juvenile Justice Information System (a data system containing information on juveniles in Virginia’s juvenile justice system submitted by all court service units serve Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Courts in the Commonwealth.) (See Virginia Code § 16.1-224.)

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